

Some Examples of Conjugate P -Harmonic Differential Forms

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There has been new interest developing in the study of the Hodge theory and p -harmonic differential forms in recent years, largely pertaining to applications in quasi-conformal analysis, electromagnetic theory, relativity theory, mathematical physics, nonlinear potential theory, etc. In this paper, we develop an effective method to find conjugate p -harmonic differential forms in R^n by applying Hodge theory in calculations with the p -harmonic equation. As applications of the method, we obtain some interesting examples of conjugate p -harmonic differential forms. © 1998 Academic Press

1. NOTATION AND DEFINITIONS

Let e_1, e_2, \dots, e_n denote the standard unit basis of \mathbf{R}^n . For $l = 0, 1, \dots, n$, the linear space of l -vectors, spanned by the exterior products $e_I = e_{i_1} \wedge e_{i_2} \wedge \dots \wedge e_{i_l}$, corresponding to all ordered l -tuples $I = (i_1, i_2, \dots, i_l)$, $1 \leq i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_l \leq n$, is denoted by $\wedge^l = \wedge^l(\mathbf{R}^n)$. The Grassmann algebra $\wedge = \bigoplus \wedge^l$ is a graded algebra with respect to the exterior products. For $\alpha = \sum \alpha^I e_I \in \wedge$ and $\beta = \sum \beta^I e_I \in \wedge$, the inner product in \wedge is given by

$$\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle = \sum \alpha^I \beta^I$$

with summation over all l -tuples $I = (i_1, i_2, \dots, i_l)$ and all integers $l = 0, 1, \dots, n$.

Throughout this paper, we always assume Ω is a connected open subset of \mathbf{R}^n . We write $\mathbf{R} = \mathbf{R}^1$. A differential l -form ω on Ω is a de Rham current (see [12, Chapter III]) on Ω with values in $\wedge^l(\mathbf{R}^n)$. We denote the

general l -form by $du \in \wedge^l(\mathbf{R}^n)$, where $u \in \wedge^{(l-1)}(\mathbf{R}^n)$ is an $(l-1)$ -form. Note that a 0-form is the usual function in \mathbf{R}^n . The space of differential l -forms is denoted by $D'(\Omega, \wedge^l)$.

We define the Hodge star operator $\star: \wedge \rightarrow \wedge$ as follows.

DEFINITION 1. If $\omega = \alpha_{i_1, i_2, \dots, i_k}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) dx_{i_1} \wedge dx_{i_2} \wedge \dots \wedge dx_{i_k}$, $i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_k$, is a differential k -form, then $\star\omega = \text{sign}(\pi) \alpha_{i_1, i_2, \dots, i_k}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) dx_{j_1} \wedge \dots \wedge dx_{j_{n-k}}$, where $\pi = (i_1, \dots, i_k, j_1, \dots, j_{n-k})$ is a permutation of $(1, \dots, n)$ and $\text{sign}(\pi)$ is the signature of permutation.

We should notice that the Hodge star operator can be defined equivalently as follows:

DEFINITION 1'. If $\omega = \alpha_{i_1, i_2, \dots, i_k}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) dx_{i_1} \wedge dx_{i_2} \wedge \dots \wedge dx_{i_k} = \alpha_I dx_I$, $i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_k$, is a differential k -form, then $\star\omega = \star\alpha_{i_1 i_2 \dots i_k} dx_{i_1} \wedge dx_{i_2} \wedge \dots \wedge dx_{i_k} = (-1)^{\Sigma(I)} \alpha_I dx_J$, where $I = (i_1, i_2, \dots, i_k)$, $J = \{1, 2, \dots, n\} - I$ and $\Sigma(I) = k(k+1)/2 + \sum_{j=1}^k i_j$.

For example, in $\wedge^1(\mathbf{R}^3)$, $\star dx_1 = (-1)^2 dx_2 \wedge dx_3 = dx_2 \wedge dx_3$.

We know that the Hodge star operator has the following properties:

- (i) \star maps k -forms to $(n-k)$ -forms for $0 \leq k \leq n$.
- (ii) Let e_1, e_2, \dots, e_n be the standard unit basis of \mathbf{R}^n and let $\alpha, \beta \in \wedge$. Then

$$\star 1 = e_1 \wedge e_2 \wedge \dots \wedge e_n \quad \text{and} \quad \alpha \wedge \star\beta = \beta \wedge \star\alpha = \langle \alpha, \beta \rangle (\star 1).$$

Hence the norm of $\alpha \in \wedge$ is given by the formula $|\alpha|^2 = \langle \alpha, \alpha \rangle = \star(\alpha \wedge \star\alpha) \in \wedge^0 = \mathbf{R}$. The Hodge star is an isometric isomorphism on \wedge with \star (from \wedge^l to \wedge^{n-l}) and $\star\star(-1)^{l(n-l)}$ (from \wedge^l to \wedge^l). We denote the exterior derivative by $d: D'(\Omega, \wedge^l) \rightarrow D'(\Omega, \wedge^{l+1})$ for $l = 0, 1, \dots, n$. Its formal adjoint operator $d^\star: D'(\Omega, \wedge^{l+1}) \rightarrow D'(\Omega, \wedge^l)$ is given by $d^\star = (-1)^{nl+1} \star d \star$ on $D'(\Omega, \wedge^{l+1})$, $l = 0, 1, \dots, n$. Note that d^\star is a differential operator and

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle \alpha, d\beta \rangle dv = \int_{\Omega} \langle d^\star\alpha, \beta \rangle dv$$

for $\alpha, \beta \in \wedge$. We say that a form ω is closed if and only if $d\omega = 0$ and a form ω is coclosed if and only if $d^\star\omega = 0$.

The beautiful Hodge theory and p -harmonic differential forms have wide applications in many fields, such as quasi-conformal analysis, electromagnetic theory, relativity theory, nonlinear elasticity, mathematical physics, nonlinear potential theory, etc. See, for example, [1], [2], [6], [7], and [10]. Considering the length of the paper, we only mention the key

point of Hodge theory. The key point of Hodge theory is that harmonic forms (that is, forms ω such that $d\omega = 0$ and $d^*\omega = 0$, or equivalently, $(dd^* + d^*d)\omega = 0$) defined on a complex manifold are cohomology classes. To be more precise, in every de Rham cohomology class of a complex manifold, there exists a unique harmonic form (this is a theorem similar to the Chevalley–Eilenberg theorem saying that in every de Rham cohomology class of a compact connected Lie group there is a unique bi-invariant form). Also, the following Hodge decomposition theorem plays an important role in the Hodge theory (see [10]).

THEOREM 2. *If $\omega \in L^p(\mathbf{R}^n, \wedge^k)$, $1 < p < \infty$, then there is a $(k - 1)$ -form α and a $(k + 1)$ -form β such that*

$$\omega = d\alpha + \delta\beta$$

and $d\alpha + \delta\beta \in L^p(\mathbf{R}^n, \wedge^k)$. Moreover the forms $d\alpha$ and $\delta\beta$ are unique and

$$\alpha \in \text{Ker } \delta \cap L_1^p(\mathbf{R}^n, \wedge^{(k-1)}),$$

$$\beta \in \text{Ker } d \cap L_1^p(\mathbf{R}^n, \wedge^{(k+1)}),$$

and we have the uniform estimate

$$\|\alpha\|_{L_1^p(\mathbf{R}^n)} + \|\beta\|_{L_1^p(\mathbf{R}^n)} \leq C_p(k, n)\|\omega\|_p$$

for some constant $C_p(k, n)$ independent of ω . Here the Hodge operator δ is defined by $\delta = (-1)^{n(n-k)}\star d\star$, $k = 0, 1, \dots, n$. The Hodge operator δ is the formal adjoint of d .

Many papers about p -harmonic differential forms have been published recently (see [3–5], [8–11], and [13]). In this paper, we do some calculations with the p -harmonic equation by applying Hodge theory successfully. Hence, we develop an effective method to find conjugate p -harmonic differential forms in \mathbf{R}^n . As applications of the method, we obtain some interesting examples of conjugate p -harmonic differential forms, particularly Example 7.

The equation for differential forms

$$d^*A(x, d\omega) = 0, \quad (1)$$

is called the A -harmonic equation, where $A: \Omega \times \wedge^l(\mathbf{R}^n) \rightarrow \wedge^l(\mathbf{R}^n)$ satisfies the following conditions:

$$|A(x, \xi)| \leq a|\xi|^{p-1} \quad (\star)$$

and

$$\langle A(x, \xi), \xi \rangle \geq |\xi|^p \quad (\star\star)$$

for almost every $x \in \Omega$ and all $\xi \in \wedge^l(\mathbf{R}^n)$. Here $a > 0$ is a constant and $1 < p < \infty$ is a fixed exponent associated with (1). A solution to (1) is an element of the Sobolev space $W_{p,\text{loc}}^1(\Omega, \wedge^{l-1})$ such that

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle A(x, d\omega), d\varphi \rangle dv = 0$$

for all $\varphi \in W_p^1(\Omega, \wedge^{l-1})$ with compact support.

In order to formulate the Hardy–Littlewood type estimate it is required first of all that the equation is written in the form of a first order differential system:

$$A(x, du) = d^{\star}v. \quad (2)$$

In this way we obtain a pair (u, v) of $(l-1)$ -form u and $(l+1)$ -form v , called the conjugate A -harmonic tensors. For example, $du = d^{\star}v$ is an analogue of a Cauchy–Riemann system in \mathbf{R}^n . Clearly, the A -harmonic equation is not affected by adding a closed form to u and coclosed form to v . Therefore, any type of estimates between u and v must be modulo such forms. Suppose that u is a solution to (1) in Ω . Then by the Poincaré lemma, at least locally in a ball B , there exists a form $v \in W_q^1(B, \wedge^{l+1})$, $1/p + 1/q = 1$, such that (2) holds.

DEFINITION 3. When u and v satisfy (2) in Ω , and A^{-1} exists in Ω , we call u and v conjugate A -harmonic differential forms (or conjugate A -harmonic tensors) in Ω .

If u satisfies the p -harmonic equation

$$d^{\star}(du|du|^{p-2}) = 0, \quad (3)$$

then

$$du|du|^{p-2} = d^{\star}v, \quad (4)$$

and v satisfies the conjugate q -harmonic equation

$$d(d^{\star}v|dv|^{q-2}) = 0 \quad (5)$$

with $1/p + 1/q = 1$.

DEFINITION 4. If a pair of $(l-1)$ -form u and $(l+1)$ -form v satisfy (4), then u and v are called conjugate p -harmonic differential forms (or conjugate p -harmonic tensors).

Note that $w = \star v$ satisfies

$$d\star(dw|dw|^{q-2}) = 0. \quad (6)$$

Also, we should notice that if u is a function, Eq. (3) reduces to the usual p -harmonic equation

$$\operatorname{div}(\nabla u |\nabla u|^{p-2}) = 0.$$

2. CALCULATIONS WITH THE p -HARMONIC EQUATION

First we develop a method to find conjugate harmonic tensors in \mathbf{R}^3 for $p = 2$. Then we consider the general case. If $p = 2$, then Eq. (4) reduces to the following simple form:

$$du = d\star v. \quad (7)$$

Here $u = u(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ is any 0-form (function) and v is a 2-form defined by

$$v = v_1 dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + v_2 dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + v_3 dx_2 \wedge dx_3, \quad (8)$$

where $v_1 = v_1(x_1, x_2, x_3)$, $v_2 = v_2(x_1, x_2, x_3)$, and $v_3 = v_3(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ are functions in \mathbf{R}^3 . Since $d\star = \star d\star$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} d\star v &= \star d\star v = \star d(\star v) = \star d(v_1 dx_3 - v_2 dx_2 + v_3 dx_1) \\ &= \star \left(\left(\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1} dx_1 + \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} dx_2 + \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_3} dx_3 \right) \wedge dx_3 \right) \\ &\quad - \left(\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} dx_1 + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_2} dx_2 + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3} dx_3 \right) \wedge dx_2 \\ &\quad + \left(\frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_1} dx_1 + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2} dx_2 + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_3} dx_3 \right) \wedge dx_1. \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

We know that $dx_i \wedge dx_j = -dx_j \wedge dx_i$ for $i \neq j$ and $dx_i \wedge dx_i = 0$. Hence, we obtain

$$d\star v = \left(\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3} \right) dx_1 + \left(\frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1} \right) dx_2 - \left(\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2} \right) dx_3.$$

Thus, the equation

$$du = d\star v$$

is equivalent to the system

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} &= \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2}.\end{aligned}\tag{10}$$

When $q = 2$, the conjugate q -harmonic equation (5) reduces to

$$d(d^\star v) = 0.\tag{11}$$

From (9), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}d(d^\star v) &= \left(-\frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_2^2} - \frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_2 \partial x_3} - \frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_1^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_1 \partial x_3} \right) dx_1 \wedge dx_2 \\ &\quad - \left(\frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_1^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_1 \partial x_2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_2 \partial x_3} + \frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_3^2} \right) dx_1 \wedge dx_3 \\ &\quad + \left(-\frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_1 \partial x_2} - \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_2^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_1 \partial x_3} - \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_3^2} \right) dx_2 \wedge dx_3.\end{aligned}$$

So the equation $d(d^\star v) = 0$ is equivalent to the following system:

$$\begin{aligned}-\frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_2^2} - \frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_2 \partial x_3} - \frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_1^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_1 \partial x_3} &= 0, \\ \frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_1^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_1 \partial x_2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_2 \partial x_3} + \frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_3^2} &= 0, \\ -\frac{\partial^2 v_2}{\partial x_1 \partial x_2} - \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_2^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_1}{\partial x_1 \partial x_3} - \frac{\partial^2 v_3}{\partial x_3^2} &= 0.\end{aligned}\tag{12}$$

Thus, in order to find harmonic tensors, we only need to solve system (10). This gives us a method to find conjugate harmonic tensors for the case $p = q = 2$.

Similarly to the case of $p = 2$, we know that the equation

$$du|du|^{p-2} = d^\star v$$

is equivalent to (we use notation $\nabla u = du$)

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2}\end{aligned}\tag{13}$$

with $p \neq 2$. Note

$$\nabla u = du = \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} dx_1 + \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} dx_2 + \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} dx_3.$$

We only need to find a p -harmonic function u satisfying (13) and a 2-form v defined by (8) and satisfying (13). Such a pair of u and v are conjugate p -harmonic tensors. We should note that system (13) has infinitely many solutions.

Now we are going to develop a method to find p -harmonic tensors in \mathbf{R}^n . Similarly to the case of $n = 3$, we try to get the equivalent system for the equation

$$du|du|^{p-2} = d^\star v$$

in \mathbf{R}^n . Let

$$v = \sum_{i < j} v_{ij} dx_i \wedge dx_j \tag{14}$$

be a 2-form in \mathbf{R}^n , where $v_{ij} = v_{ji}$, $1 \leq i, j \leq n$. Then

$$\star v = \sum_{i < j} (-1)^{2(2+1)/2+i+j} v_{ij} dx_{I-\{i,j\}},$$

where $I = \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$, that is,

$$\star v = \sum_{i < j} (-1)^{i+j+1} v_{ij} dx_{I-\{i,j\}}.$$

Thus

$$d(\star v) = \sum_{i < j} (-1)^{i+j+1} \left((-1)^{i-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} dx_{I-\{i\}} + (-1)^{j-2} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_{I-\{i\}} \right).$$

Therefore, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
d^\star v &= \star d(\star v) \\
&= \sum_{i < j} (-1)^{i+j+1} (-1)^{n(n-1)/2 + n(n+1)/2} \\
&\quad \times \left((-1)^{-j+i-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} dx_j + (-1)^{-i+j} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_i \right) \\
&= \sum_{i < j} \left((-1)^{n^2} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} dx_j + (-1)^{n^2+1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_i \right) \\
&= (-1)^{n^2} \sum_{i < j} \left(\frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} dx_j - \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_i \right) \\
&= (-1)^{n^2} \left(\sum_{i < j} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} dx_j - \sum_{i < j} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_i \right) \\
&= (-1)^{n^2} \left(\sum_{j=2}^n \left(\sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} \right) dx_j - \sum_{j=2}^n \sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_i \right).
\end{aligned}$$

Note $v_{ij} = v_{ji}$, so that the second sum can be written as

$$\begin{aligned}
- \sum_{j=2}^n \sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_i &= - \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \sum_{j=i+1}^n \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_j} dx_i \\
&= - \sum_{j=1}^{n-1} \sum_{i=j+1}^n \frac{\partial v_{ji}}{\partial x_i} dx_j \\
&= \sum_{i=2}^n \left(- \frac{\partial v_{1i}}{\partial x_i} dx_1 \right) + \sum_{j=2}^{n-1} \left(\sum_{i=j+1}^n \left(- \frac{\partial v_{ji}}{\partial x_i} \right) \right) dx_j.
\end{aligned}$$

Similarly, we have

$$\sum_{j=2}^n \left(\sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} \right) dx_j = \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \frac{\partial v_{in}}{\partial x_i} dx_n + \sum_{j=2}^{n-1} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} \right) dx_j.$$

Hence, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
 d^\star v &= (-1)^{n^2} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \frac{\partial v_{in}}{\partial x_i} dx_n + \sum_{j=2}^{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} dx_j \right. \\
 &\quad \left. - \sum_{i=2}^n \frac{\partial v_{1i}}{\partial x_i} dx_1 - \sum_{j=2}^{n-1} \sum_{i=j+1}^n \frac{\partial v_{ji}}{\partial x_i} dx_j \right) \\
 &= (-1)^{n^2} \left(- \sum_{i=2}^n \frac{\partial v_{1i}}{\partial x_i} dx_1 + \sum_{i=2}^{n-1} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} - \sum_{i=j+1}^n \frac{\partial v_{ji}}{\partial x_i} \right) dx_j \right. \\
 &\quad \left. + \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \frac{\partial v_{in}}{\partial x_i} dx_n \right).
 \end{aligned}$$

By (4), we have the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 du|du|^{p-2} &= (-1)^{n^2} \left(- \sum_{i=2}^n \frac{\partial v_{1i}}{\partial x_i} dx_1 + \sum_{j=2}^{n-1} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} - \sum_{i=j+1}^n \frac{\partial v_{ji}}{\partial x_i} \right) dx_j \right. \\
 &\quad \left. + \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \frac{\partial v_{in}}{\partial x_i} dx_n \right). \quad (15)
 \end{aligned}$$

If $u = u(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$ is a function, then (15) can be written as the following system:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= (-1)^{n^2} \left(- \sum_{i=2}^n \frac{\partial v_{1i}}{\partial x_i} \right), \\
 \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_j} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= (-1)^{n^2} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{j-1} \frac{\partial v_{ij}}{\partial x_i} - \sum_{i=j+1}^n \frac{\partial v_{ji}}{\partial x_i} \right), \quad (16) \\
 j &= 2, 3, \dots, n-1,
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_n} |\nabla u|^{p-2} = (-1)^{n^2} \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \frac{\partial v_{in}}{\partial x_i}.$$

Thus, we know that (4) is equivalent to system (16). In order to find p -harmonic differential forms, we only need to find u and v satisfying (16).

Also, from a result in [10], we obtain the relationship between the K -quasi-regular mappings and the conjugate \mathcal{A} -harmonic tensors (for the definition of K -quasi-regularity, see [8] or [10]).

THEOREM 5. Let $f(x) = (f^1, f^2, \dots, f^n)$ be K -quasi-regular in \mathbf{R}^n . Then

$$u = f^l df^1 \wedge df^2 \wedge \dots \wedge df^{l-1}$$

and

$$v = * f^{l+1} df^{l+2} \wedge \dots \wedge df^n,$$

$l = 1, 2, \dots, n-1$, are conjugate A -harmonic tensors, where A is some operator satisfying (\star) and $(\star\star)$ in Section 1.

3. SOME EXAMPLES OF CONJUGATE A -HARMONIC TENSORS

In this section, we obtain some examples of conjugate A -harmonic tensors by using the methods developed in the last section. It is easy to show that $u = C_1\theta + C_2$ is a p -harmonic function \mathbf{R}^3 , where $\theta = \arctan(x_2/x_1)$. Using this fact, we have the following example.

EXAMPLE 1. Let $u = C_1\theta + C_2 = C_1 \arctan(x_2/x_1) + C_2$ be a function in \mathbf{R}^3 and let v be a 2-form defined by

$$v = \left[-\frac{C_1}{2} \ln(x_1^2 + x_2^2) + F(x_3) \right] dx_1 \wedge dx_2 \\ + G(x_2) dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + C_3 dx_2 \wedge dx_3,$$

where $F(x_3)$ and $G(x_2)$ are differentiable functions and C_i , $i = 1, 2, 3$, are constants. Then u and v are a pair of conjugate harmonic tensors (for the case $p = q = 2$).

In the above example, $v_1 = -(C_1/2)\ln(x_1^2 + x_2^2) + F(x_3)$, $v_2 = G(x_2)$, and $v_3 = C_3$. Then u , v_1 , v_2 , and v_3 are solutions of (10), and v_1, v_2, v_3 also satisfy (12). Therefore, u and v are a pair of conjugate harmonic tensors.

EXAMPLE 2. Let u be a 0-form (function) defined in Example 1 and let v be a 2-form defined by

$$v = v_1 dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + v_2 dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + v_3 dx_2 \wedge dx_3,$$

where

$$v_1 = -\frac{C_1}{2} \ln(x_1^2 + x_2^2) - \int G(x_2) dx_2 + F(x_3)$$

$$v_2 = x_3 G(x_2) + H(x_2)$$

$$v_3 = C_3.$$

Here $F(x_3)$, $G(x_2)$, and $H(x_2)$ are differentiable functions, and C_1, C_2, C_3 are constants. By checking that u and v satisfy (10), we know that u and v are a pair of conjugate harmonic tensors.

In the above two examples, we just consider the case of $p = 2$ and $n = 3$ (in \mathbf{R}^3). Now, we consider the case $p \neq 2$. By the method developed in the last section, we only need to find u and v such that u and v satisfy (4) or system (13). We write some details in the following example.

EXAMPLE 3. We try to solve system (13). Note

$$\nabla u = du = \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} dx_1 + \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} dx_2 + \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} dx_3. \quad (17)$$

If $u = \arctan(x_2/x_1)$, then

$$|\nabla u| = \left(\left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} \right)^2 \right)^{1/2} = (x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-1/2}, \quad (18)$$

thus,

$$|\nabla u|^{p-2} = (x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{1-p/2}.$$

Suppose that $u = \arctan(x_2/x_1)$ and $v_3 = C_3$ (constant), then system (13) reduces to

$$\begin{aligned} -x_2(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-p/2} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ x_1(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-p/2} &= -\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1}, \\ 0 &= \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1}. \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

Similarly to the case of $p = 2$, we have

$$v_2(x_1, x_2, x_3) = g(x_2, x_3), \quad g \in C^2(\Omega),$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} v_1(x_1, x_2, x_3) &= -\int x_1(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-p/2} dx_1 \\ &= -\frac{1}{2-p}(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{1-p/2} + h(x_2, x_3). \end{aligned}$$

Then

$$\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} = -x_2(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-p/2} + h'_{x_2}$$

and

$$\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3} = g'_{x_3}.$$

Do substitution in the first equation in system (19) to obtain

$$h'_{x_2} + g'_{x_3} = 0.$$

Hence,

$$h(x_2, x_3) = - \int \frac{\partial g}{\partial x_3} dx_2 + F(x_3),$$

where $F(x_3) \in C^2(\Omega)$. Thus, we find a group of solutions to (13) as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} u &= \arctan \frac{x_2}{x_1}, \\ v_1 &= -\frac{1}{2-p}(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{1-p/2} + F(x_3) - \int \frac{\partial g(x_2, x_3)}{\partial x_3} dx_2, \quad (20) \\ v_2 &= g(x_2, x_3), \\ v_3 &= C_1, \end{aligned}$$

where $F(x_3), g(x_2, x_3) \in C^2(\Omega)$ and C_1 is a constant. That is to say, if

$$v = v_1 dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + v_2 dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + v_3 dx_2 \wedge dx_3,$$

then

$$du|du|^{p-2} = d^\star v, \quad p \neq 2,$$

has a group of solutions u and v defined by (20).

Remark. If we choose a different v_3 at the beginning, we might get some other forms of solutions.

EXAMPLE 4. Let

$$u = \frac{1}{\rho} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}},$$

$$v_3 = x_1 + x_2 + x_3.$$

By substituting u and v_3 into system (10), we have

$$\begin{aligned} -\frac{x_1}{\rho^3} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ -\frac{x_2}{\rho^3} &= -\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1} + 1, \\ -\frac{x_3}{\rho^3} &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - 1. \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

Solving system (21), we obtain the following solutions:

$$\begin{aligned} v_1 &= \frac{x_1 x_2}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}} + G(x_3) + x_1, \\ v_2 &= \frac{x_1 x_3}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}} + H(x_2) - x_1, \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

$$v_3 = x_1 + x_2 + x_3,$$

where $G(x_3), H(x_2) \in C^2(\Omega)$. So that, for $p = 2$ and $n = 3$, we know that

$$u = \frac{1}{\rho} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}},$$

$$v = v_1 dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + v_2 dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + v_3 dx_2 \wedge dx_3$$

are conjugate harmonic tensors, where v_1, v_2 , and v_3 are defined by (22).

EXAMPLE 5. Using the same method as in Example 4, we know that

$$\begin{aligned} u &= \frac{1}{\rho} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}}, \\ v_1 &= \frac{x_1 x_2}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}} + G(x_3), \\ v_2 &= \frac{x_1 x_3}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}} + H(x_2), \\ v_3 &= F(x_1), \end{aligned}$$

$F, G, H \in C^2(\Omega)$, define another pair of conjugate harmonic tensors.

EXAMPLE 6. We can show that

$$u = \rho^{(p-3)/(p-1)} = (x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(p-3)/2(p-1)}$$

is a p -harmonic function in \mathbf{R}^3 . By computation and then simplification, we have the following results:

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_i} = \frac{p-3}{p-1} x_i \rho^{(p+1)/(1-p)}, \quad i = 1, 2, 3,$$

$$\nabla u = du = \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} dx_1 + \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} dx_2 + \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} dx_3,$$

$$|\nabla u| = \left(\left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} \right)^2 \right)^{1/2} = \left| \frac{p-3}{p-1} \right| \rho^{2/(1-p)},$$

$$|\nabla u|^{p-2} = \left| \frac{p-3}{p-1} \right|^{p-2} (x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(p-2)/(1-p)}.$$

Therefore, system (13) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} - \left| \frac{p-3}{p-1} \right|^{p-2} x_1 (x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(5p-7)/2(1-p)} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ - \left| \frac{p-3}{p-1} \right|^{p-2} x_2 (x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(5p-7)/2(1-p)} &= -\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1} + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_3}, \\ - \left| \frac{p-3}{p-1} \right|^{p-2} x_3 (x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(5p-7)/2(1-p)} &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2}. \end{aligned} \quad (23)$$

Choosing $v_3 = x_1 + x_2 + x_3$ and applying (23), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} v_1 &= x_1 + ax_2 F(x_1, x_2, x_3) + g(x_2, x_3), \\ v_2 &= -x_1 ax_3 F(x_1, x_2, x_3) + h(x_2, x_3), \\ v_3 &= x_1 + x_2 + x_3, \end{aligned} \quad (24)$$

where

$$F(x_1, x_2, x_3) = \int (x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(5p-7)/2(1-p)} dx_1$$

and $a = -(p-3)/(p-1)^{p-2}$, $g, h \in C^1(\Omega)$, satisfy

$$-ax_1(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(5p-7)/2(1-p)} = a(2F + x_2 F'_{x_2} + x_3 F'_{x_3}) + g'_{x_2} + h'_{x_3}.$$

Therefore, we have the following conjugate p -harmonic tensors:

$$u = \rho^{(p-3)/(p-1)} = (x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{(p-3)/2(p-1)},$$

$$v = v_1 dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + v_2 dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + v_3 dx_2 \wedge dx_3,$$

where v_1 , v_2 , and v_3 are defined by (24).

For $p = 2$ in \mathbf{R}^3 , we obtain the following nice example which has beautiful symmetries.

EXAMPLE 7. Let

$$u = \frac{3}{\rho} = \frac{3}{\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}}$$

be a harmonic function in \mathbf{R}^3 . We just switch the positions of v_1 and v_3 in the definition of v in the last example and let v be a 2-form in \mathbf{R}^3 defined by

$$v = v_3 dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + v_2 dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + v_1 dx_2 \wedge dx_3.$$

Then (10) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} &= \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_1}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} \end{aligned} \tag{10}'$$

and (13) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_2} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_1}, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_3} |\nabla u|^{p-2} &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2}. \end{aligned} \tag{13}'$$

Here v_1 , v_2 , and v_3 are defined as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} v_1 &= \frac{x_2 x_3}{\sqrt{\sum x_i^2}} \frac{x_2^4 - x_3^4}{\prod_{i < j} (x_i^2 + x_j^2)} = \frac{x_2 x_3}{\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}} \frac{x_2^2 - x_3^2}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)(x_1^2 + x_3^2)}, \\ v_2 &= \frac{x_1 x_3}{\sqrt{\sum x_i^2}} \frac{x_1^4 - x_3^4}{\prod_{i < j} (x_i^2 + x_j^2)} = \frac{x_1 x_3}{\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}} \frac{x_1^2 - x_3^2}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)(x_2^2 + x_3^2)}, \\ v_3 &= \frac{x_1 x_2}{\sqrt{\sum x_i^2}} \frac{x_1^4 - x_2^4}{\prod_{i < j} (x_i^2 + x_j^2)} = \frac{x_1 x_2}{\sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2}} \frac{x_1^2 - x_2^2}{(x_1^2 + x_3^2)(x_2^2 + x_3^2)}. \end{aligned}$$

Then u and v are a pair of conjugate harmonic tensors. Now, we check that u , v_1 , v_2 , and v_3 defined above satisfy (10)'. For $u = 3/\rho$, system (10)' reduces to

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{-3x_1}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} &= \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\ \frac{-3x_2}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_1}, \\ \frac{-3x_3}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2}. \end{aligned} \tag{10}''$$

By a long computation and simplification, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} &= \frac{x_3(x_2^2 - x_3^2)}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} + \frac{2x_3x_2^2}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^2(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{1/2}}, \\ \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_3} &= \frac{x_2(x_2^2 - x_3^2)}{(x_1^2 + x_3^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} + \frac{-2x_2x_3^2}{(x_1^2 + x_3^2)^2(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{1/2}}, \\ \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} &= \frac{x_3(x_1^2 - x_3^2)}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} + \frac{2x_3x_1^2}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^2(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{1/2}}, \\ \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3} &= \frac{x_1(x_1^2 - x_3^2)}{(x_2^2 + x_3^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} + \frac{-2x_1x_3^2}{(x_2^2 + x_3^2)^2(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{1/2}}, \\ \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_1} &= \frac{x_2(x_1^2 - x_2^2)}{(x_1^2 + x_3^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} + \frac{2x_2x_1^2}{(x_1^2 + x_3^2)^2(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{1/2}}, \\ \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2} &= \frac{x_1(x_1^2 - x_2^2)}{(x_2^2 + x_3^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} + \frac{-2x_1x_2^2}{(x_2^2 + x_3^2)^2(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{1/2}}. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, it follows that

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3} \\
 &= \frac{x_1(2x_1^2 - (x_2^2 + x_3^2))}{(x_2^2 + x_3^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} - \frac{2x_1}{(x_2^2 + x_3^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{1/2}} \\
 &= \frac{-3x_1(x_2^2 + x_3^2)}{(x_2^2 + x_3^2)(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}} \\
 &= \frac{-3x_1}{(x_1^2 + x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{3/2}}.
 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, the first equation in system (10)'' holds. By the same method, we can check that the second and third equations in (10)'' hold too.

By a long computation and simplification, we know that

$$\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_3} = 0.$$

So v is a closed 2-form.

EXAMPLE 8. Clearly, $u = a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + a_3x_3$ is a p -harmonic function in \mathbf{R}^3 . Here a_i is a constant for $i = 1, 2, 3$. By simple calculation, we have

$$|\nabla u|^{p-2} = |a_1^2 + a_2^2 + a_3^2|^{p/2-1}.$$

If we write $a = |a_1^2 + a_2^2 + a_3^2|^{p/2-1}$, then (13)' reduces to

$$\begin{aligned}
 a_1a &= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_3}, \\
 a_2a &= \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x_1}, \\
 a_3a &= -\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x_2}.
 \end{aligned} \tag{25}$$

(i) If we choose $v_1 = 0$, then, solving the second and third equations in (25), we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 v_2 &= -a_3ax_1 + g(x_2, x_3), \\
 v_3 &= -a_2ax_1 + h(x_2, x_3).
 \end{aligned}$$

We may put $g(x_2, x_3) = h(x_2, x_3) = 0$. Thus, we get

$$v_1 = 0,$$

$$v_2 = -a_3 ax_1,$$

$$v_3 = -a_2 ax_1.$$

(ii) Similarly to case (i), now putting $v_2 = 0$, we have

$$v_1 = -a_3 ax_2,$$

$$v_2 = 0,$$

$$v_3 = a_1 ax_2.$$

(iii) In the same way, we obtain

$$v_1 = a_2 ax_3,$$

$$v_2 = a_1 ax_3,$$

$$v_3 = 0.$$

Combining cases (i), (ii), and (iii), we obtain

$$v_1 = \frac{1}{2}a(a_2 x_3 - a_3 x_2),$$

$$v_2 = \frac{1}{2}a(a_1 x_3 - a_3 x_1),$$

$$v_3 = \frac{1}{2}a(a_1 x_2 - a_2 x_1)$$

satisfies (25). Thus, we know that

$$u = a_1 x_1 + a_2 x_2 + a_3 x_3,$$

$$\begin{aligned} v = & \frac{a}{2}(a_1 x_2 - a_2 x_1) dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + \frac{a}{2}(a_1 x_3 - a_3 x_1) dx_1 \wedge dx_3 \\ & + \frac{a}{2}(a_2 x_3 - a_3 x_2) dx_2 \wedge dx_3 \end{aligned}$$

are a pair of conjugate p -harmonic tensors in \mathbf{R}^3 for $1 < p < \infty$ and $p \neq 2$.

By a discussion similar to Example 8, we have the following Example 9.

EXAMPLE 9. Let

$$u = \arctan\left(\frac{x_2}{x_1}\right),$$

$$\begin{aligned} v = & \frac{1}{2(p-2)}(x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{1-p/2} dx_1 \wedge dx_2 \\ & - \frac{1}{2}x_2 x_3 (x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-p/2} dx_1 \wedge dx_3 \\ & + \frac{1}{2}x_1 x_3 (x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-p/2} dx_2 \wedge dx_3. \end{aligned}$$

Then u and v are a pair of conjugate p -harmonic tensors in \mathbf{R}^3 .

As we know, $u = \arctan(x_2/x_1)$ is a p -harmonic function for any $p > 1$. So that

$$u = \arctan \frac{x_2}{x_1} + \arctan \frac{x_3}{x_2} + \arctan \frac{x_1}{x_3}$$

is also a p -harmonic function since a p -harmonic equation is symmetric with respect to x_1 , x_2 , and x_3 . By the same method in Example 8, we obtain the following v_1 , v_2 , and v_3 for $p = 2$:

$$\begin{aligned} v_1 &= \frac{x_1 x_3}{2} (x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-1} - \frac{1}{2} \ln(x_2^2 + x_3^2) + \frac{x_1 x_2}{2} (x_1^2 + x_3^2)^{-1}, \\ v_2 &= \frac{1}{2} \ln(x_1^2 + x_3^2) - \frac{x_2 x_3}{2} (x_1^2 + x_2^2)^{-1} - \frac{x_1 x_2}{2} (x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{-1}, \\ v_3 &= \frac{x_1 x_3}{2} (x_2^2 + x_3^2)^{-1} + \frac{x_2 x_3}{2} (x_1^2 + x_3^2)^{-1} - \frac{1}{2} \ln(x_1^2 + x_2^2). \end{aligned} \quad (26)$$

EXAMPLE 10. Let

$$u = \arctan \frac{x_2}{x_1} + \arctan \frac{x_3}{x_2} + \arctan \frac{x_1}{x_3}$$

and let v_1, v_2, v_3 be defined by (26). Then u and v defined by

$$v = v_3 dx_1 \wedge dx_2 + v_2 dx_1 \wedge dx_3 + v_1 dx_2 \wedge dx_3$$

are a pair of conjugate harmonic tensors in \mathbf{R}^3 .

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